

SUGGESTED
MEETING
FORMAT
WITH
BASIC
READINGS
FOR
VIRTUAL
MEETINGS



Families Anonymous UK
(adapted from Families Anonymous World Service Board version Oct 2020)

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS

SUGGESTED MEETING FORMAT FOR VIRTUAL MEETINGS

(Before the meeting starts, place the following information in the Chat area:

- url for the FA UK website www.famanon.org.uk
- url for free downloads <http://famanon.org.uk/downloads/>
- url for FA online shop, for purchases and donations: <http://famanon.org.uk/shop/>
- url for FA UK discussion forum <https://famanon.co.uk/forum/>
- Serenity Prayer, Meeting Topics, or any other group info

~~ THE LEADER STARTS THE MEETING ~~

We welcome you to the regular [day] _____ meeting of the [group name] _____ of **FAMILIES ANONYMOUS**. My name is and I'll be your leader for this evening. Please mute the audio on your line until it is time for you to share. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, please be in a location away from nonparticipants and do not record the meeting.

Also please enter your first name and phone number in the Chat Area of this meeting if you wish to share this information with others. If you would like to lead a meeting or are willing to sponsor someone, you may also specify that in the Chat Area.

If there are any visitors or newcomers present, please unmute your line and introduce yourself, by first name only. **WELCOME!** If you are willing to stay online for a few minutes after the meeting concludes, we will have someone available to speak to you and answer any questions you may have. You have shown courage by taking the 1st step and attending your first meeting. We encourage you to attend at least six meetings before deciding if FA is the program for you.

Are there any second- or third-timers? **WELCOME BACK!** We hope you will soon feel part of the group.

Shall we have a few moments' silence to remember why we are here?

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS is primarily for those who have known a feeling of desperation concerning the use of drugs or related behaviour of someone very near to them. When you come into this room you are no longer alone, but among friends who have experienced similar problems. We will respect your confidence and anonymity as we know you will respect ours.

Usually, the longer we continue to struggle alone, the more our thinking becomes confused. We have found that the working of our Twelve Steps enables us to live comfortably - in spite of unsolved problems - and often removes obstacles to the recovery of those who brought us to this programme.

Here we begin to understand that to be of real help to others, we must first be willing to be helped ourselves. We only ask for the wisdom to see ourselves as we really are; for the courage to do something about our own lives, with the help of a Power greater than ourselves as we understand this; and for the grace to release with love those we are concerned about and to cease trying to change them.

We believe we are dealing with a family illness that can be treated by a change of attitudes. We try to study our literature with an open mind, attend as many meetings as

possible, and exchange phone numbers with other members for help between meetings.

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS has basic readings that form the foundation of our Twelve Step Programme. They are read by different members at every meeting to remind us of the message they carry.

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1 INTRODUCTION/Welcome to Newcomers (optional) | 4 TWELVE STEPS |
| 2 ABOUT DRUG ABUSE | 5 TWELVE TRADITIONS |
| 3 FOUR DESTRUCTIVE FORCES | 6 HELPING |

THANK YOU!

These readings, along with other material, are available as free downloads on the FA website. Our Administrator has placed the link in the Chat Area. There is also a large selection of excellent FA literature for sale on our online shop; the Administrator has placed that link in the Chat Area as well.

Remember that even when you're not at a meeting, your program travels with you. So when you feel the need for support, phone another member. You can also start or join in the online discussion forum.

If anyone would like to lead a meeting, remember any piece of FA literature, such as a bookmark, a Step or Tradition, or a reading from *Today A Better Way* (TABW), makes an excellent topic for discussion. Different members lead our meetings; we encourage everyone to take a turn. It is empowering to lead a meeting no matter how long you have been attending FA. Remember when leading, that the topic should be no longer than 10 minutes and is meant only to begin the group discussion.

The Group Conscience asks that all members refrain from gossip, dominance, discussion of any religion, treatment centres, self-help programmes, counselling or the use or mention of other than **FA** approved literature. Please remember that in **FA** we keep the focus on **US** and not on the drug user.

Anything you hear tonight is strictly the speaker's own opinion. If a member says something you cannot accept, remember they are speaking from their own experience - and not for **FAMILIES ANONYMOUS**. The meeting will finish at We will save the last part of the meeting for newcomers or those who have not yet spoken.

So that everyone will have a chance to contribute, we ask that you wait to be recognised by the leader to share with the whole group.

Within the meeting, we try to avoid crosstalk, which is defined as:

- Speaking without being recognized by the leader
- Carrying on a separate, one-on-one, side discussion during the meeting
- Asking questions and giving feedback or advice to another member

~~ THE LEADER CONDUCTS THE MEETING ~~

{Optional} The leader may now make a short personal statement (How I was before FA, what happened and what I am like now - no more than 5 minutes).

(The leader now introduces the Step Study, Tradition, Topic for Discussion)

[In the last part of the meeting the leader says:

Is there anyone else who hasn't spoken and would like to share now?

IF THERE IS A NEWCOMER, ASK: Do you wish to say anything? You don't have to if you don't want to. There will be time after the meeting to ask questions. *(Allow time for newcomer to share.)*

(When everyone who wants to share has done so, the leader closes the meeting, as follows.)

CLOSING

The principles of **FAMILIES ANONYMOUS** are found in our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Our Seventh Tradition states that each group should be fully self-supporting. While no dues or fees are required for membership, or especially of newcomers, our voluntary contributions are used to pay for meeting costs and literature, as well as allowing us to carry the message of our programme to others through the continued support of the FA Service Office.

As we don't 'pass the basket' online, anyone wishing to make a donation to FA may do so in the online shop. *[Optional]: If your group has set up a method for contributing to your local group, indicate that here].*

Are there any announcements from the Secretary?

The Treasurer?

The very essence of our programme is that everything is merely suggested. Our progress can be made in our own time and in our own way. As this is an anonymous programme, we ask all members and visitors to respect our anonymity. The stories you hear are told in confidence and should not be repeated outside. They are told so that we might better understand this programme and ourselves, and to give encouragement and help to the new member.

When you leave here, take with you those thoughts that will be most helpful to you and forget those you cannot accept. And now, for those who care to join us, we will join hands and say the Serenity Prayer together.

**GOD GRANT ME THE SERENITY
TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE,
THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN,
AND THE WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.**

[End with (optional):]

**KEEP COMING BACK.
IT WORKS IF YOU WORK IT,
SO WORK IT, YOU'RE WORTH IT,
IT WON'T IF YOU DON'T!**

Introduction /Welcome to Newcomers

Welcome to your first Families Anonymous meeting. Each one of us was a newcomer once and we understand how you are feeling.

Families Anonymous is a fellowship of people whose lives have been affected by the use of mind altering substances or related behavioural problems of a relative or friend.

Many recovery programs are available for our addicted loved ones, when they are ready to seek help and recovery. However, Families Anonymous is for US: the parent, spouse, brother, sister or emotionally involved relative or friend.

A lot of what you may hear tonight may not make sense to you and we recommend that you try at least six meetings before deciding if our programme works for you.

In the beginning we seem to be most helped by listening to those who have shared similar experiences and found some answers. By attending meetings, studying the literature, talking to other members, and working the Twelve Steps of this program, suddenly or gradually our situation begins to look different to us and our reactions begin to change.

Whenever you hear the word God, do not think that this is a religious group. It is simply a convenient word for the higher power we talk about. That concept can be anything you find helpful, including the power of the Group. We have in our Fellowship atheists who do not find the programme impossible to practise.

Our programme is open to all, regardless of our various beliefs or lack of belief. Our primary purpose is to practice the principles of Families Anonymous so we may help ourselves by helping others with similar problems.

The meeting will finish at pm. We do not answer questions during the meeting itself but there will be time after the meeting if you would like to raise any particular points; you are not of course obliged to say anything if you do not wish to.

ABOUT DRUG ABUSE

Not everyone who comes into this programme is concerned about the use of drugs. However, in today's world, all of us need to confront this issue. Also, those with an emotional problem often turn to drugs in search of a solution to their problem.

We have learned that drug abuse, drug dependence, or addiction is a matter of illness, not a moral issue. For the purposes of this programme, the label is not important.

Dependence on drugs can be psychological or physical or both. The compulsive use of drugs or alcohol does not indicate a lack of affection for the family. Even when they know what will happen when they take the first pill, drink or fix, the drug dependent person may still do so. This is the "insanity" we speak of in regard to this illness. Using drugs as a means of escaping reality is a symptom of emotional problems. However, little emotional growth is likely to take place until the individual stops using chemicals to try to solve their problems of living. Switching from one mind-altering substance to any other, including alcohol, is only likely to prolong the illness, not arrest the problem.

There is nothing that we as individuals can do to prevent another person's abuse of drugs, but we have learned there is much we can do to avoid standing in the way of their recovery. We have found that the most constructive approach is to deal with our own reactions and to learn new ways of coping with our problems. When we accept drug dependence as an illness and understand there is something we can do to help both ourselves and the situation, we become ready to learn a better way to live.

FOUR DESTRUCTIVE FORCES

To enable our meetings to be truly constructive, it is necessary to recognise and repress four destructive forces that can cause dissention and eventually destroy the group.

The first is the discussion of any religion. Our programme is open to all regardless of our various beliefs - or lack of belief. Each member's understanding of a Higher Power is a strictly personal, private choice.

The second destructive force is gossip. We are here to share our feelings, attitudes, and reactions to our situation - to help us in applying the principles of Families Anonymous to our **own** lives. Careless discussion of other people's personal difficulties is contrary to the principles of our programme. What we say here - stays here!

The third destructive force is dominance. Families Anonymous is based on suggestion, interchange of experience, and rotation of leaders. No member should direct, assume authority, or give advice. Our leaders are chosen, not to govern, but to serve.

The fourth destructive force is dwelling on the past. Harboring painful thoughts and speaking endlessly about hurtful times with our loved ones block our recovery. Besides being detrimental to our personal progress, continuous behaviour of this type within the meeting, week after week, is destructive to the group's progress and unity. Such behaviour can lead us back to the Third Destructive Force, which is dominance.

Instead, we let go of the past by listening to other members, reading our FA literature and learning new ways to change our actions and attitudes, thereby improving our lives.

TWELVE STEPS

We have found that our success in this programme is determined by how well we accept and apply the following suggested steps:

- 1 We admitted we were powerless over drugs and other people's lives - that **our** lives had become unmanageable.
- 2 Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, **as we understood Him.**
- 4 Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 5 Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 6 Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 7 Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
- 8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 9 Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 10 Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 12 Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practise these principles in all our affairs.

TWELVE TRADITIONS

We keep what we have only with vigilance. Our group experience suggests that the unity of FAMILIES ANONYMOUS depends upon our adherence to these Traditions:

- 1 Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity.
- 2 For our group purposes there is but one authority - a loving God, as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants - they do not govern.
- 3 Individuals concerned with another's abuse of drugs or related problems of living, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves a **Families Anonymous** group provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is a concern about the use of mind-altering substances or related behavioural problems of a relative or friend.
- 4 Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or FA as a whole.
- 5 Each group has but one primary purpose, to help those concerned with someone who may have a problem of drug abuse or dependence. We do this by practising the Twelve Steps of this programme, by encouraging and understanding those affected by this illness, and by welcoming and giving comfort to the families and friends of individuals with a current, suspected, or former drug problem.
- 6 Our Family Groups should never endorse, finance, or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
- 7 Every group should be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
- 8 **Families Anonymous** Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.
- 9 Our groups, as such, should never be organised, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to the groups they serve.
- 10 **Families Anonymous** has no opinion on outside issues; hence our name should never be drawn into public controversy.
- 11 Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we should always maintain personal **anonymity** at the level of press, radio, films and TV and any other public or private media. We need guard with special care the **anonymity** of our members, as well as those of other recovery programmes.
- 12 **Anonymity** is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

HELPING

My role as helper is not to do things for the person I am trying to help, but to be things; not to try to control and change their actions, but through understanding and awareness, to change my reactions. I will change my negatives to positives; fear to faith; contempt for what they do to respect for the potential within them; hostility to understanding; manipulation or over-protectiveness to release with love, not trying to make them fit a standard or image, but giving them an opportunity to pursue their own destiny, regardless of what their choice may be.

I will change my dominance to encouragement; panic to serenity; the inertia of despair to the energy of my own personal growth; and self-justification to self-understanding.

Self-pity blocks effective action. The more I indulge in it, the more I feel that the answer to my problems is a change in others and in society, not in myself. Thus I become a hopeless case.

Exhaustion is the result when I use my energy in mulling over the past with regret, or in trying to figure ways to escape a future that has yet to arrive. Projecting an image of the future and anxiously hovering over it, for fear that it will or it won't come true, uses all of my energy and leaves me unable to live today. Yet living today is the only way to have a life.

I will have no thought for the future actions of others, neither expecting them to be better or worse as time goes on, for in such expectations I am really trying to create or control. I will love and let be.

All people are always changing. If I try to judge them, I do so only on what I think I know of them, failing to realise that there is much I do not know. I will give others credit for attempts at progress and for having had many victories which are unknown.

I, too, am always changing, and I can make that change a constructive one, if I am willing. I CAN CHANGE MYSELF. Others, I can only love.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR GETTING THE MOST OUT OF ONLINE FA MEETINGS

Online FA meetings have the same essential components as face-to-face meetings, in that we recite our basic readings, discuss the Steps, and share our experiences, strength and hope about finding serenity despite dealing with the disease of addiction. But online meetings are very different from face-to-face meetings in that everyone is not together in the same room: each of us is in our own space, at home, and on camera.

Because of that, it takes a bit of care to ensure that we look and sound like our natural, in person selves so that we get the most out of the meetings. Here are a few basic tips to keep in mind:

1. Watch your camera angle. Set up your computer or smartphone so that the camera is at or slightly above eye level and angled down toward your face. Sit close enough to your computer or smartphone that your full face, neck and shoulders fill up the middle third of the screen and there's not too much space above your head. This will present you in a natural-looking, level, full-face pose. The same rules apply if you're attending as a couple; place the camera at or slightly above eye level, and be sure the image of the two of you fills most of the screen. Check your background, too: if it's too cluttered or "busy," that makes it harder for your FA colleagues to pay attention to you.
2. Make sure you are well lit. It's best to have soft, diffuse light directly in front of you so your face isn't in shadow but isn't too bright or "washed out" either. Facing toward windows with natural daylight could work for daytime meetings. For evening meetings, good artificial light can be as simple as a desk or table lamp set behind or just to one side of your camera, at approximately eye level, so it shines toward your face.
3. Minimize distractions. Just as we silence our phones in face-to-face meetings to prevent interruptions, we should do the same when attending a meeting online. In addition, take steps beforehand to limit distractions and interruptions from elsewhere in the house during the meeting. If possible, take the call in a separate room and ask to not be disturbed during that time. This protects the rest of the group's anonymity. If you find you need to get up and move around, turn your camera off to avoid distracting others.
4. Present yourself as you would in person. Dress as you would if you were attending a face-to-face FA meeting. When you speak, look into the camera on your computer or phone, not at your image on the screen or at the faces of the other attendees displayed there. This will enhance their feeling that you're sharing directly with them.
5. Follow the rules. The person leading your online meeting will lay out the ground rules, such as muting your microphone unless you're sharing, checking the Chat area for information about literature and donations.. Please pay attention and follow the rules carefully to ensure that everyone's online experience is as rewarding as it can be.

The following are suggested ground rules:

- All but two people should be muted during the meeting: the leader and the person sharing. Others may mute/unmute themselves, depending on if

they're sharing or not. The administrator of the meeting may have the capability to mute everyone in case there is background noise.

- When it's time for a specific reading, it is very helpful for the leader to share his/her screen with the group so everybody can follow the reading online.
 - It's best when group members take turns reading. The leader can call on specific people to read, or attendees can volunteer to read, whichever works best for the group.
- Ask for volunteers to stay online after the meeting to check in with any newcomers, to address questions or comments, and to coordinate delivery of a Welcome! (Newcomer's) kit or any other materials of interest. Announce this at both the beginning and the end of the meeting. A typical newcomer's welcome pack includes: Group phone list; Letter to Newcomer; Serenity Prayer card; 'Does Someone You Care About Use Drugs' leaflet; 'But I'm not the one who needs FA' questionnaire bookmark; Literature order form.

Using the Chat area:

- Ask people to enter their first name and phone number / email address under Chat if they are willing to be contacted between meetings. This is a convenient way for newcomers to take someone's number.
 - Use Chat for people to express interest in leading an upcoming meeting.
 - Use Chat for members to express interest in either being a sponsor or seeking a sponsor.
- Use Chat to point people to the URL for Families Anonymous donations, literature purchases and downloads.
 - Use Chat to point people to the URL for FA UK discussion forum.
 - Use Chat to share meeting topics..

GROUP POSITIONS IN THE VIRTUAL FORMAT

Below are additional duties of group positions in the virtual format. Depending on the size and needs of the group, the group has the option to combine positions.

Administrator – This is a new position. Alternatively the secretary can perform these tasks.

- Sends the URL to members each week for logging on to the virtual meeting. May also include the topic for the week so members can prepare in advance.
- Forwards the “Suggested Meeting Format” to newcomers.
- Adds the following information to chat:
 - FA website: famanon.org.uk
 - Free downloads of FA material: famanon.org.uk/downloads
 - FA e-store for literature purchases: famanon.org.uk/shop
 - Donations to the UK Service Office: famanon.org.uk/shop
 - Other ways to donate: see Appendix for other ways to donate and GiftAid info
- Opens the webpage for the meeting, and admits members as they come on.
- Asks for volunteers to lead the next meeting.
- Closes the webpage at the end of the meeting.

Treasurer

- Assists members if they have questions about how to donate.
- Reports the status of finances and donations to the group on a regular basis.

Literature Chair

- Mails new-member packs to newcomers.
- Recommends literature for specific issues, and assists members with questions.

Greeter

- Greets members as they come on the call.
- Makes newcomers feel welcome.
- Stays on the call after it closes to answer questions for newcomers.

APPENDIX: How to donate to the UK FA Service Office.

If you make a donation as an individual and you are a resident taxpayer in UK, the FA can claim GiftAid on your donation. Each method of donation listed below includes info on how to indicate to the FA treasurer that your donation may be included in a GiftAid claim.

There are 4 ways to donate to FA as well as, or instead of, ‘passing the basket’:

1. Via the online shop at : famanon.org.uk/shop . select ‘donation’ as an item to purchase. The amount defaults to £5 but you can change this any amount. Payment is by debit/credit card or Paypal.
If relevant, tick the box on the screen marked ‘GiftAid’.
2. Via a standing order from a bank account. A standing order form is attached below.
3. By direct payment to FA using online banking.
The account name is:
THE SERVICE OFFICE OF FAMILIES ANONYMOUS (UK, EIRE & GIBRALTAR)
LTD
Bank: LLOYDS TSB BANK PLC sort code: 30-90-69
Account Number: 27765868
Please inform the Board Treasurer of your donation via email to office@famanon.org.uk or by post to Families Anonymous, DRCA, Charlotte Despard Avenue, Battersea, London SW11 5HD.
4. By cheque: The cheque should be made out to
THE SERVICE OFFICE OF FAMILIES ANONYMOUS (UK, EIRE &
GIBRALTAR) LTD
and mailed to Families Anonymous, DRCA, Charlotte Despard Avenue, Battersea,
London SW11 5HD with a covering letter.

If use methods 2,3,or 4, and you wish FA to claim GiftAid, complete a GiftAid form (also attached below) and return it to the Board Treasurer via email to office@famanon.org.uk or by post to Families Anonymous, DRCA, Charlotte Despard Avenue, Battersea, London SW11 5HD.

LLOYDS TSB

STANDING ORDER MANDATE TO PAY FAMILIES ANONYMOUS UK

Please send this part to your bank

To: _____ Bank Sort Code: _____

Address: _____

Please pay the undernoted Standing Order with effect from ___ / ___ / ___

Signature _____ date ___ / ___ / ___

Please pay the standing order to: (BENEFICIARY DETAILS)

Bank: LLOYDS TSB BANK PLC sort code: 30-90-69

Address: 98 VICTORIA STREET, LONDON SW1E 5JL

Account Name: THE SERVICE OFFICE OF FAMILIES ANONYMOUS (UK, EIRE & GIBRALTAR) LTD

Account Number: 27765868

Reference No:

Please pay the following:

(PAYMENT DETAILS)

Amount: £ In words

Commencing ___ / ___ / ___ Due date & Frequency

Last Payment ___ / ___ / ___
Or: until further notice _____

To be debited from my account:

(REMITTER(S) DETAILS)

Account number: _____ Account Name(s) _____

Special Instructions PLEASE CANCEL ALL PREVIOUS STANDING ORDER
AND/OR DIRECT DEBIT MANDATES UNDER REFERENCE NO _____

BANKS MAY DECLINE TO ACCEPT INSTRUCTIONS TO CHARGE STANDING ORDERS TO CERTAIN TYPES OF ACCOUNTS OTHER THAN CURRENT ACCOUNTS.

Please cut off this part and send it to the FA Board Treasurer

by email office@famanon.org.uk

or post to Families Anonymous, DRCA, Charlotte Despard Ave., Battersea, London SW11 5HD

Name: _____ group: (optional) _____

I have set up a standing order to pay £ _____ every (month / year) to THE SERVICE OFFICE OF FAMILIES ANONYMOUS (UK, EIRE & GIBRALTAR) LTD beginning from (date) _____

Signed _____

Gift Aid declaration for individual donations

Name of Charity

The Service Office of Families Anonymous (UK, EIRE and Gibraltar) Limited

Please treat all donations I make to Families Anonymous as a Gift Aid donation.

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for the current tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for the current tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given.

Donor's details

Title ----- First name or initial(s) -----

Surname -----

Full Home address -----

Postcode -----

Date -----

Signature -----

Has a Standing Order been set up? Yes/ No -----

Please notify the charity if you:

Want to cancel this declaration; Change your name or home address; No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Please return this form to the Board Treasurer via the office, either by email to office@famanon.org.uk or by mail to Families Anonymous, DRCA, Charlotte Despard Ave., Battersea Park, London SW11 5HD